

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to FIGS. 6 and 7. These sheets, which includes FIGS. 5-7 replaces the original sheets including those same Figures.

In FIG. 6, reference numerals 96' and 96'' have been redrawn to be more legible, and reference numerals 71 and 73 have been reversed.

In FIG. 7, reference numerals 96' and 96'' have been redrawn to be more legible.

Attachments: Replacement sheets
 Marked-up copy of drawings

REMARKS

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-24 are now present in this application. Claims 1, 10, 17, and 24 are independent.

Amendments have been made to the Abstract of the Disclosure and Specification, claims 21-24 have been added, and claims 1-5 and 9 have been amended. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Priority Under 35 U.S.C. § 119

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging Applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, and receipt of the certified priority document.

Objection to the Drawings

The Examiner has objected to the drawings because of numerous formalities.

First, the Examiner has objected to the drawings because the reference character 82 of FIG. 4 and reference character 84 of FIG. 5 have been used to designate "an automatic temperature switch." Applicants respectfully submit that this objection is overcome by the amendment of the paragraph beginning on page 16, line 17.

Second, the Examiner has objected to the drawings as they fail to show the correct cross-sectional view taken along line A – A in FIG. 5. Applicants respectfully submit that the drawing change to Fig. 6, where the reference numerals 71 and 73 have been switched, overcomes this objection.

Third, the Examiner has objected to the drawings as they fail to show the reference characters "line B – B in FIG. 5." Applicants respectfully submit that this objection is overcome by the amendment to two paragraphs of the specification, the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 6, and the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 21.

Fourth, the Examiner has objected to FIG. 7 as representing different descriptive features when compared to FIG. 5. Applicants respectfully submit that the changes to FIGS. 6 and 7,

makes clear that the orientation of the holes in FIG. 7 is correct. Therefore, this objection is overcome.

In addition, as noted above, Applicants are concurrently submitting Replacement Drawing Sheets for the Examiner's approval, which address the deficiencies pointed out by the Examiner. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

Objection to the Abstract of the Disclosure

The Examiner has objected to the Abstract of the Disclosure because it exceeds 150 words. In order to overcome this objection, Applicants have amended the Abstract of the Disclosure to reduce the number of words in the Abstract of the Disclosure. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

Specification Objection

The Examiner has objected to the specification because of several informalities. In order to overcome this objection, Applicants have amended the specification in order to correct the deficiencies pointed out by the Examiner. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-3 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakamura in view of Hutchinson. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 has been amended to recite a combination of elements in a steam supplying apparatus for a washing machine including a tank having a water inlet and a steam outlet, a heater arranged in the tank, the heater adapted to heat water supplied into the tank to generate steam to be supplied

to the steam outlet, and a water level limiter arranged to provided an air-compressible space in the tank that defines a water level limit of the tank, the water level limiter being configured to direct water exceeding the water level limit into the steam outlet. Applicants respectfully submit that this combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 1 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Nakamura in view of Hutchinson.

The Examiner acknowledge that Nakamura fails to disclose a water level limiter, but then asserts that it would be obvious to provide a water level limiter as inherently taught by Hutchinson to prevent water from seeking an exit through a steam outlet.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness for several reasons. First, Applicants note that the very reason the Examiner suggests it would be obvious to combine Nakamura and Hutchinson (i.e., to prevent water from the tank from passing through the steam outlet) is what the claimed invention requires. Namely, “the water level limiter being configured to direct water exceeding the water level limit into the steam outlet.”

Second, the Examiner has not provided any evidence or other showing indicating the limitations set forth in claim 1 would be inherent in Hutchinson. As indicated in the M.P.E.P. at section 2112, “[t]he fact that a certain result or characteristic may occur or be present in the prior art is not sufficient to establish the inherency of that result or characteristic.” (citations omitted)(emphasis in original). “To establish inherency, the extrinsic evidence ‘must make clear that the missing descriptive matter is necessarily present in the thing described in the reference, and that it would be so recognized by persons of ordinary skill. Inherency, however, may not established by probabilities or possibilities. The mere fact that a certain thing may result from a given set of circumstances is not sufficient.’” In re Robertson, 169 F.3d 743, 745, 49 USPQ2d 1949, 1950-51 (Fed. Cir. 1999)(citation omitted). Since the Examiner has not cited any extrinsic evidence to clearly show that certain features of claim 1 is “necessarily present” in Hutchinson, Applicant respectfully request the examiner to withdraw the claim rejection based on inherency for claim 1.

Finally, Nakamura discloses a boiler (6,7) that includes a jet nozzle 22 that is rotatably moveably by a mechanism 10. The boiler 7 provides steam through the jet nozzle 22 when the lid 4 is closes. Consequently, the outlet from the boiler 7 is in the middle of an end of the boiler 7 as the boiler 7 is arranged in a mostly horizontal position. In contrast, Hutchinson discloses a portable

steam generator system that is operated in a vertical orientation. Therefore, whatever hypothetical effect that Hutchinson achieves is based on a vertical orientation and if Hutchinson were disposed in a mostly horizontal configuration, the same effect would not be achieved and one of ordinary skill in the art would not expect to obtain the claimed result.

For the foregoing reasons, it would not be obvious to combine Nakamura and Hutchinson and the § 103(a) rejection should be withdrawn.

With regard to dependent claims 2, 3, and 9, Applicants submit that claims 2, 3, and 9 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 1, which is allowable for the reasons set forth above, and therefore claims 2, 3, and 9 are allowable based on their dependence from claim 1. Reconsideration and allowance thereof are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claims 10-20 are allowed and that claims 4-8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. However, claims 4-8 have not been rewritten in independent form at this time, since it is believed that independent claim 1, from which these claims depend is allowable.

Claims 21-24

Claims 21-24 have been added for the Examiner's consideration. Applicants submit that claims 21-23 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 1, and are therefore allowable based on their dependence from claim 1, which is believed to be allowable.

In addition, claims 21-24 recite further limitations which are not disclosed or made obvious by the applied prior art references.

Independent claim 23 recites a combination of steps in a method of supplying steam to a washing machine including supplying water for a preset time to a tank that includes a water inlet and a steam outlet, heating the supplied water in the tank to generate steam to be supplied to the steam outlet, and draining water that exceeds a defined water level limit by a water level limiter in the tank, the water level limiter being arranged to provide an air-compressible space in the

tank, and to direct water exceeding the defined water level limit out of the tank through the steam outlet. Applicants respectfully submit that this combination of steps as set forth in independent claim 1 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record.

Consideration and allowance of claims 21-24 are respectfully requested.

Additional Cited References

Since the remaining references cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but have merely been cited to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot.

Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

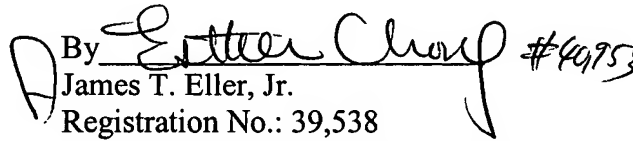
If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Chad D. Wells, Registration No. 50,875, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: October 15, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

By  #49753
James T. Eller, Jr.
Registration No.: 39,538
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicants

Attachments:

Replacement Sheets
Marked-up Copy of Drawings

CDW

MARK-UP VERSION

FIG. 7

